

# MINORITY REPORT

ON THE

# SLAVE TRADE,

SUBMITTED TO THE

# LEGISLATURE,

NOVEMBER, 1857.

---

CHARLESTON:

HARPER & CALVO, PRINTERS, 125 EAST-BAY.

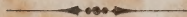
1858.







REPORT OF THE MINORITY  
OF THE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF SEVEN,  
TO WHOM WAS REFERRED SO MUCH OF  
GOV. ADAMS' MESSAGE, NO. 1,  
AS RELATES TO  
SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE TRADE.



CHARLESTON:  
HARPER & CALVO, PRINTERS, 125 EAST-BAY.  
1858.





## MINORITY REPORT.

---

The undersigned, a minority of the special committee of seven to whom was referred so much of Message No. 1, of his late Excellency as relates to Slavery and the Slave Trade, begs leave to submit the following Report:

Before entertaining the main question it has seemed to him proper to ascertain the point of view from which it should be considered, and for this purpose it is necessary to bear in mind the primary object for which the Legislature of South Carolina is assembled. We have been entrusted by the people of the State with large discretionary powers, contained in a general grant and subject to but few positive restrictions. Indeed there can scarcely be said to exist any limitations upon the discretion of the Legislature in its selection of means to accomplish a given end, provided they fall within the class of "Laws;" but the legitimate objects of this legislation, though numerous, have one well ascertained boundary—the Legislative power is to be exercised for the benefit of the citizens of the State, to guard their rights, to protect and advance their interests. For themselves alone have they instituted a government, and invested it with almost unlimited control over life and property. They have avoided that ambitious imbecility, which, neglecting its own concerns, would prescribe philanthropic rules for the Universe. The first, then, and perhaps the only point of view from which this body must consider every question, is the probable advantage accruing therefrom to the State of South Carolina. Should the measure proposed be of no present or prospective advantage to the State, it does not fall within the grant of Legislative power; should the measure proposed be injurious to the State, whether or not its adoption would bless the whole world besides, it is self-evident that we not only have no right to force it upon our constituents, but in so doing would violate every principle of delegated and constitutional authority. The people have not yet granted to any agent, however exalted, the power of sacrificing them for the benefit of others; this is one of the reserved rights which have been retained by Society to be

Point of view from which the question should be considered.



surrendered only in its most solemn forms. In attempting to reach a satisfactory conclusion on the present question, the undersigned has carefully kept this fact in view. Were he sitting as a member of the King's Council for Ashantee or Dahomey the result attained would possibly have been different. Looking upon the ancestors of our slaves as they exist in their native land, clothed in filth and squalor, slaughtering each other by law, upon the most trivial occasions, selling their wives and children to the pale-faced stranger, acknowledging no impulse save that of unbridled passion, no restraint save that of physical fear, without morals or religion, or the capacity for self progress, and barely removed from the brute by some faint idea of association; and then glancing across the Atlantic to the shores of America upon the four millions of slaves, their descendants, robust, cheerful, fed, clothed, cared for when sick and aged, instructed in the elements of religion, surrounded by the enlightenment of an advancing civilization, the vast majority contented in their present condition, and all in a position of moral and material welfare superior to the laboring classes of Europe—in view of the striking contrast presented, the undersigned, as a friend of Africa, might well advocate the revival of the Slave Trade, and receive its agents as angels of mercy. But objects nearer home have profounder claims upon our philanthropy—friends, neighbors, fellow-citizens—and we have no right to jeopard their welfare even for the salvation of the African continent. And, indeed, the undersigned has confined his investigation to South Carolina; he has not considered the effect of the proposed measure upon the States beyond the Cape Fear, or the Savannah; not that he is indifferent to the happiness of those ancient commonwealths, for the Southern States of the Confederacy must live and die together, and the isolation of any one could only injure the general cause; but because the history of our own State, her present condition, her wants, are familiar to us, and we have had bitter experience of the folly of those who from the recesses of selfish or conceited ignorance attempt to regulate the destiny of foreign Nations. Called upon as a Carolinian, to consider this question, he has considered it as a Carolinian. Having thus ascertained the proper point of view, viz: the advantage accruing to the State of South Carolina, it is next necessary to remove certain obstacles, that under the appearance of arguments, are calculated only to obstruct distinct vision and to distort the true proportions of the object to be considered, which is the more necessary upon the present occasion, since our habit of repelling, with indignation, what we have have justly considered the impertinent attacks of pseudo-philanthropists, has rendered it difficult for us—for the undersigned, at least—

Certain quasi arguments to be first disposed of.



to regard any question connected with slavery in that light of impartial and dispassionate reason, which and which alone the emergency demands.

In deciding questions connected with Slavery, it is of the utmost importance to guard our judgement as to the propriety of any proposed step, from being perverted by the opinions of those who are not brought into direct contact with the institution, and are consequently without the means of obtaining correct information, even if they possessed the requisite impartiality to aid us with their counsels. The undersigned would be loth to underrate the moral opinion of the world; it is entitled to deference and reasonable submission; to maintain the contrary would betray shallowness of intellect and obtuseness of moral sense. But it cannot expect implicit obedience nor an exemption from just criticism; we bow before it only when founded upon impartial reason and correct information. With neither of these requisites it has ventured to pronounce judgement upon the institution of slavery, and it is well that the eyes of the Southern people should be opened to the fact, that they stand alone in the civilized world. However political parties may be divided in Europe, they have no sympathy with us. Absolutists dare not view with indifference a nation of republicans, who have up to the present succeeded in counterposing the destructive element contained in every free government, and preserving the stability of their institutions through the conservative influence of Slavery. We are a standing contradiction to their dogma of the incapacity of mankind for self-government, and a silent reproach upon the means necessary to maintain their power. The Democrats of Europe, the antipodes of American Republicans, hold us in still greater horror; theirs is the centralized absolutism of the many, changing its head day by day, and vibrating fitfully on the extremes of military empire and socialistic tyranny; to them the self-government of individuals, the corner-stone of our system, as distinguished from the mutual oppression of masses, is a stumbling block and foolishness. The Aristocracy of privileged classes is dying of atrophy, and the puny remnants of that once powerful institution, struggling for bare existence, are but too anxious to discredit Republicanism by re-echoing the popular prejudices. The opinion, then, of the outside world on slavery is entitled to less weight than upon almost any other subject, being destitute of every foundation which renders opinion respectable, and the undersigned concurs most heartily in pronouncing that a diseased sentimentality, which impels the fanatics of the North and England to dilate upon the horrors of slavery in the presence of those who are perishing morally and physically

1st. The  
opinion of  
the world.



beneath the oppression of capital. But while resisting those opinions which would condemn slavery, it is equally necessary to refrain from following the false lights which would lead us in another direction to sanction the Slave Trade. The establishment of the Coolie and Apprentice Traffic has given an unfortunate and most unwarranted impulse to this idea, as though we were to derive no lesson from the vices and crimes of our enemies save that of imitation. Perhaps, since the dawn of civilization, no system was ever entertained by enlightened nations, so thoroughly characterized by all that is odious and disgraceful in humanity, and at the same time so utterly devoid of every feature which could mitigate the evils, incident to all human transactions. Even in its most barbarous days, the Slave Trade had some redeeming features; there was room for a hope, if not an expectation of eventual good; but the traffic in Coolies and Apprentices revives all the disagreeable features of slavery as it formerly existed in the West Indies, (but never here,) and what is infinitely worse, superadds the relentless tyranny exercised by capital over labor. With all the authority of a Master, the hirer of Apprentices is unrestrained by the sentiment of kindness, which every one feels towards his family of whatever color, or that other impulse, perhaps equally potent, which prompts every one to preserve his own property. For the first time in the history of the world, a system has been devised which encourages the Master to work his slave to death in a specified number of years. We may truly say, "There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day." Far from furnishing an example the conduct of these abolitionists should arouse in us only those feelings which are inspired by the union of systematic cruelty with hollow hypocrisy; and rejecting that delusive folly which seeks an apology in the conduct or sympathy of others, we should act according to our internal convictions—the only source of true moral strength.

2d. That the epithet "piracy" is an insult to the slaveholder. Controverted.

Another idea, which in the opinion of the undersigned, is without any solid foundation, or any bearing upon the main question, has been advanced in his Excellency's Message, viz: that the punishment of Piracy, denounced upon the Slave Trade, stigmatizes property in slaves as plunder. It is not worth while to stick in the bark of this objection, and show that Piracy and plunder are not necessarily correlative terms. Take the still broader proposition, that it is a stigma at all. The distinction existing in Nature, though very properly not recognized in Courts of Law, between *malum prohibitum* and *malum in se*, will scarcely be denied by an educated person. The one designates an act that shocks our moral sensibilities, and is independent of,



or rather anterior to, the necessities of associated existence, the other finds its origin solely in those necessities. The act itself may be innocent, but the consequences of this intrinsically innocent act may be so deleterious to society as to require its prohibition by law, under the sanction of punishment even unto death. Examples innumerable can be found in our statutes. The selling of lottery tickets is of itself an innocent act—none more so, but the consequences are highly injurious to society; and in view of these consequences, it is declared to be a crime, and severely punished. The circulation here of the small bank notes of other States is an innocent act; but to preserve our currency pure, it has been placed under the ban of a heavy penalty. Now, will any one pretend that a Carolinian, by purchasing a lottery ticket, or accepting a Georgia bank note, becomes thereby a criminal, or is stigmatized by the Statute as a cheat and a rogue? Is even the passer of a Georgia note subject to any other reproach than that of violating a regulation which tends to the preservation of good order? And so it is with offences against the Law of Nations. The right of private participation in offensive warfare, on land, was once universally recognized; it is now universally considered contrary to the Law of Nations. But because the offender is punished with death, is he therefore a murderer? Is it the punishment, and not the crime, that constitutes his disgrace? Is it not simply an arbitrary regulation, springing from the necessity, admitted in modern times, of regulating warfare, and rendering it a contest of nations, rather than of individuals? Apply these undeniable principles to the Slave Trade. A pirate has been defined as *hostis humani generis*—an enemy to the human race; one who follows an occupation that is sanctioned by no government, and is injurious to all mankind. The world also suggests collateral ideas of maritime locality, cruelty, &c., &c. Now suppose, for the sake of argument, it were universally admitted that the importation of wild Africans into a civilized country, would be highly injurious to that country; that the Africans also considered such exportation injurious to their own; suppose the trade to be carried on upon the ocean, and under circumstances oftentimes revolting to humanity; suppose it to be, moreover, perfectly consistent with Natural Law; suppose, finally, that the Nations of the World were unanimously to endorse the preceding propositions; every requisite to constitute the offence of piracy would be present. The question is, whether the application of the term would stigmatize all the slaves held upon the face of the globe as “plunder.” The naked statement of the question is sufficient for its answer; no human ingenuity can justify an affirmative response. What possible connection can there



be between the piracy of the Slave Trade and the American slaves, which were imported at least a dozen years before the enactment in question. We might as well say, that it stigmatizes the philanthropic *Las Casas*, as a pirate. If there is nothing in the phraseology of these acts to countenance this idea, there is equally little in their history. The principle upon which this legislation is based, found no dissentient voice among the Southern members of Congress. Nor did their conduct spring from any puling sentimentality, as to the right of the white race to hold the African in bondage. Indeed, few prominent men in America, at that date, had doubts upon the subject. Washington, and the other great Southerners of his day, lived and died slaveholders, without suspecting that they thereby incurred moral guilt, or that, in preventing the importation of barbarians, they were legislating otherwise than for the benefit of slaveholders. They were equally removed, on the one hand, from intentionally stigmatizing their property as plunder, and on the other from ascending the same platform with the heroes of the middle passage. It will be seen that the preceding remarks do not involve the question as to the propriety of the application of piracy to the Slave Trade, under existing circumstances, whether burglary or arson would not be equally appropriate; the sole question, involved and considered, is, whether the application of the term "plunder" to our slaves, follows from the application of the term "piracy" to the Slave Trade as a logical necessity; or, considering the Southern votes by which these laws were passed, as a reasonable deduction. But even admit that a slave, obtained at the present day from Africa, is "plunder," this admission would not affect the title to our slaves. At the time when the importations were made into this country, Slavery and the Slave Trade were sanctioned by the public opinion of the whole world, and sedulously fostered by the very nations which are now our bitterest enemies. Freedom for the negro, whether in Africa or America, was an exceptional condition; in buying them our ancestors bought slaves, not freemen. By all human laws, then, our title was good in its inception; nothing has since occurred to impair it, and it cannot be impaired by any epithet, however strong. But even go further, suppose that our title was wrong in its inception and tainted with fraud and violence, that the Africans were freemen, our title would still be clear. The first question would be, can one man have a right to the unwilling physical labor of another; and of this right there can be no denial. It has been repeatedly recognized by the only revelation of Divine will, that has been vouchsafed to us; every nation has done the same in its municipal law; the various regulations for



indenting apprentices, hiring out vagrants and criminals, are based upon its express recognition; and redress for one of the greatest injuries to the parental relation is obtained through a fiction, which, as all other legal fictions, is entirely in harmony with the sentiments of mankind. There may be some law higher than all these, but if so, it is of too sublimated a character to guide the present race of mortals. If then, there is such an abstract right of property, would the fraud and violence in the inception of our title vitiate it at the present day? Such has never been the law of civilized nations. There is scarcely an acre of land in Europe, the links in whose chain of title have not on various occasions been bedewed with the tears of despoiled widows and orphans. Yet could any one in his sound senses impugn the title of the present possessor upon this ground without falling into the slough of socialism? There is then, a vast distinction between upholding Slavery and upholding the Slave Trade—a distinction shown by the most learned Bishop England to have been recognized by the Catholic Church through all ages, and in the political history of this country, it will be seen by the contemporaneous Congressional debates, that the East, while opposing Slavery, advocated the Slave Trade, while the course of the South was just the reverse. The cause of this difference will be no secret to those who are acquainted with the different interests of the two sections. The undersigned then, perceives little reason for participating in the sensitiveness manifested at the epithet of piracy which our ancestors with singular unanimity affixed to the Slave Trade.

Yet another idea has been advanced, which is calculated to influence the question upon other grounds than its merits, viz: that if the Slave Trade were now open we would be unwilling to close it, and hence it should be re-opened. The premise of this argument is by no means admitted; jealousy of Legislation upon the subject by Congress would probably prevent our acquiescence in any measure from that source; but if the question could be freed from the prejudices arising out of an excited controversy of a quarter of a century, it is by no means certain that the same arguments which were conclusive in 1787, would not be equally conclusive now. But even admit the premise, the conclusion does not follow at all. Of all questions connected with government, that of labor is the most delicate; it is the one where most injury can be done, and where it is least possible to predict, with certainty, the result of any given movement. Most statesmen have, therefore, avoided interference with the problem. Did the Slave Trade therefore exist, and were our industrial society founded upon a base of ignorant, barbarous, cheap laborers, we might

3d. That if  
th. Trade  
were open  
now we  
would be  
unwilling to  
close it.  
Controver-  
ted.



hesitate when called upon to revolutionize the system, with the certainty of giving a great shock to our institution, and in the utter impossibility of foreseeing its consequences. The question was, however, dealt with by our ancestors, having, as became real statesmen, taken every precaution. South Carolina anticipated the action of Congress by more than twenty years; a short time previous to 1808 the Trade was re-opened for secondary reasons, and then closed forever. Every Congressman from the State voted for the measure with one exception, and he differed only upon a point of detail; in the whole House there were but five negative votes, one from New Hampshire, one from Vermont, two from Virginia, and one from South Carolina, all of whom had previously expressed their approbation of the end to be attained; and none of these great men (for great they were) was ever known to regret the act morally, socially, politically or economically. So far, then, from drawing the conclusion above stated, it would be much more logical to draw exactly the contrary one of leaving our labor system in its present flourishing and prosperous condition.

The main question—would it be beneficial to South Carolina.

Thus much space has been devoted to the mere preliminaries, because one of the great difficulties in the way of a fair discussion, has been to strip the question of all extraneous and confusing considerations. We now stand face to face with the main question; will the revival of the Slave Trade be advantageous to South Carolina?

Arguments in its favor considered. 1st. Cheap Cotton.

The principal argument for the necessity of this measure seems to be as follows: A monopoly of the production of Cotton is necessary to the South, but the price is, or will be, too high, and will stimulate the production of it elsewhere; to maintain our monopoly, we must have cheap labor; this can be procured only by re-opening the Slave Trade, and hence the conclusion. It is true, that another part of the Message says, the value of slaves will not be thereby reduced, but this seems somewhat inconsistent with the preceding argument. The revival of the Slave Trade will either decrease or increase the value of slaves, or it will be without influence upon their value. It can scarcely be supposed that the free importation of labor into a certain confined locality, as the Slave States are, will be totally without influence upon the value of similar labor already there existing—this last supposition, may therefore be unhesitatingly rejected. Now, the fundamental doctrine of political economy, without which, the whole science would fall to the ground—is, that if a certain quantity of a certain article is exposed to the market, the natural effect of the introduction of an additional quantity of the same article, will be to diminish its previous value, or in other words, that supply and demand are correlative. This axiom is true, beyond all doubt, and its

Would decrease the value of our slaves.



application is universal. Slaves will be no more exempt from its operation than any other purchasable article. Hence the second supposition, that the importation of Africans will increase the price of negroes, must likewise, be rejected, and we are thrown back upon the first, viz: That the primary and natural effect of a revival of the Slave Trade will be to diminish the value of slaves. Indeed, circumstances inseparably connected with the Institution would probably render the depressing effect of such importation, much greater than is expressed by a simple arithmetical ratio. There are in round numbers, 400,000 slaves in South Carolina. Suppose the importation of the first season to reach 100,000, and the traders to demand the highest market price, irrespective of the prime cost to themselves: the value of slaves, would by the law of supply and demand be immediately reduced one-fifth, and every slaveholder would find the marketable value of his slaves diminished by that amount, accompanied, not with an increase, but a decrease in the value of slave products, that being the desired end. But this supposition is even too favorable. It is said that Africans can be furnished far cheaper than our slaves. Suppose then, that the traders by force of competition among themselves, are content with the prime cost and a per centage, amounting, say to half the price of our slaves. The value of every article is *ceteris paribus*, the price at which a similar article can be purchased. Upon this supposition, then, the value of every slave here, would be reduced one-half, instead of one-fifth. Placing the average value of slaves at \$700, the slaveholders of South Carolina, would lose upon each hundred slaves by the first supposition \$14,000, and by the second supposition, \$35,000. The general loss throughout the State, would be respectively \$56,000,000 and \$140,000,000. This loss to them, might be compensated by a gain to some one else, but it would nevertheless, be still a loss to them, and in all those cases where the exchangeable value of slaves is taken into consideration, as in the payment of debts, distributions of estates, &c., &c., would be felt to this extent. The supposition of equality made to avoid intricacy of calculation, causes a slight inaccuracy in the above result, which can, however, be easily corrected by any one. But the end is not yet. The law of supply and demand holds very well until the demand is supplied; and then a very slight addition, particularly if accompanied by an unlimited prospective increase, causes a glut and a vast and instantaneous depreciation, which would be arrested only at the point where capital invested in the Trade yielded no greater return, than if invested in any other branch of Commerce. We have often seen this exemplified in the cotton



market, where an over-crop of a few hundred thousand bales, sends the price down to the subsistence point. In addition to the positive loss thus sustained by the owners of slaves, the reduction in their value would be injurious in another aspect, and one affecting the whole community. In a free country, cheap labor is accompanied by certain advantages; whether sufficient to counterbalance the disadvantages is another question. The principal stimulus to free labor is necessity, and when that necessity is bare existence it attains its greatest force; but the stimulus to slave labor is altogether different; the market value has no effect upon the efficiency of the slave. Indeed, the probable effect, if any, would be to render slaves less industrious where they could be bought for a trifle, and consequently the pecuniary interest in each individual, would be less. We have also learnt by experience, that the Institution never possessed less vitality than when negroes were cheap; with the increase in their value, has increased the determination of the owners to resist emancipation, and at the present prices, there is little prospect of return of that apathy on the subject which existed in 1820 and 1830. Admit, however, that the first step on the road to cheap cotton may be thus taken, it is not the only step; we may have laborers cheap enough, but between cheap laborers and cheap labor, there is a great stride. The undersigned ventures to affirm, from the evidence of others, and from what he himself has seen, that an American slave removed three generations from the parent stock, is even a mere labor machine, worth a half more than a native African. The continual call upon a race during successive generations, for the manifestation of certain qualities is, through a species of appetency kindly responded to by nature, provided her tendencies are not thwarted by ill-treatment or other disturbing cause, but gently aided in their development. A family or a nation, which for ages is given up to intellectual or physical sloth, becomes gradually not only less and less willing, but less and less capable of exertion, and requires strong exciting causes to restore its equilibrium. And so a race, which for generations, is devoted to toil, becomes gradually wrought up to a high degree of efficiency. The world is full of examples; we have them near us. The Americans as a race, are unused to dull and continued physical labor; they are prone to work with their heads, rather than their arms, and to make nature, through the controlling influence of machinery, do her own heavy work. Hence it has been invariably found, that heavy drudgery, such as excavating mines or tunnels, is performed by certain foreign races, emigrants to this country, who have been inured to this species of labor; we are almost incapable of such lifeless,

Cheap negroes not equivalent to cheap labour.



thoughtless exertion. Any Railroad President can confirm the truth of the facts stated. Our slaves have been educated to labor for at least three generations; their bodies and minds are attuned to it, and each succeeding generation will probably be more efficient than its predecessor. Far different is the African; idleness and sensual inactivity are his normal condition; he is neither physically nor mentally capable of voluntary exertion, and when imperious necessity demands labor at his hands, he is driven only by fear of the sword in Africa, and the lash in the West Indies. A gang of Africans going forth in the morning cheerfully to work, as do our slaves, or the peasantry in Europe, would indeed be a novel sight. Any doubt as to the existence of this difference, can be easily removed by a visit to those portions of the world where the slave trade yet flourishes. The increase of labor then, under this system, would by no means be proportionate to the increase of laborers, and not only that, but the effect of discharging one hundred thousand idle, slovenly, insubordinate barbarians among our educated, civilized negroes, would be to depreciate by contamination, the whole mass down to a point somewhere below the arithmetical average efficiency. So that it would be necessary to import, not only the specified amount considered in itself, but also such an additional quantity as would compensate for the depreciation in the value of our slaves as laborers. Suppose us now, however, to have attained a cheap labor; a step yet remains, since labor is but one of the elements of cost between the producer and the manufacturer; but this point will be discussed in another place. It must also be considered in this connection, that for economical purposes, concentration of efficiency is desirable for many reasons, more particularly where human beings are concerned. A plantation of slaves will eat, drink, and wear as much after as before the revival of the Slave Trade, nor will physicians charge the less, for the price of all articles, not the produce of slave labor, will be beyond its influence. The annual running expense then, of growing a certain amount of cotton, will be greater, and the net profits two degrees less. Where indeed, a necessity of life is consumed in the country of its production, it is preferable that the larger quantity should be produced even at less profit, because in the abundance of such products consists the well-being of a population. But where the article is raised only for exportation, the producing nation is interested in the net profits alone. Such is our situation with respect to cotton. A net profit of \$100,000,000 upon 6,000,000 bales, would render us no better off than a similar net profit upon 3,000,000, but rather the contrary, for in the first case the additional labor for the production of the additional 3,000,000

Our slaves have been educated to greater efficiency.

Nett profits would not be greater.



bales would have produced no additional income, and was therefore diverted from some other and remunerative occupation.

Who would  
benefit by  
cheap cot-  
ton.

Suppose us now, at this fearful cost, to have attained the object of the problem, cheap or cheaper cotton, a question yet remains, preliminary to any action, for whose advantage is all this to be accomplished? Who is to profit by cheap cotton? It is said that the price is, or will be, too high; but this the undersigned does not admit. The absolute price is certainly greater than it was, but it seems to have been forgotten that the price of everything else throughout the commercial world has risen through a combination of three causes—the great accumulation during a long peace, of past labor in the shape of capital, the effect of which is real—the increase of the circulating medium, the effect of which is fictitious, and a succession of moderate crops, effect of which is transitory. When the effect of these causes is duly considered, it will be found that the price of our great staple is not much higher than we might reasonably demand; that it is higher than the manufacturers wish, is doubtless true; but it is equally true, that the increase of a few cents in the pound would be a matter of no great importance to them; the prime cost of the cotton being only a small portion of the price they impose upon their customers for the manufactured goods, and such increase added to the cost of these would scarcely be left by the consumer. The efforts made by England to produce this staple elsewhere are due, principally, to another cause. The general objection to our cotton is, that it is slave cotton—to some few it is odious as American cotton. This objection, in the minds of many, springs from the common fanaticism; but with the vast majority it is produced by real apprehension as to the stability of the Institution of Slavery; the prevalent idea abroad being that Southern society slumbers on a volcano, and at any unexpected moment may be overthrown by a political convulsion—such as has just shaken the British Empire in India. It would not be relevant to the present question to show the unfounded nature of this belief; it exists, and the conviction that the destruction of slavery would cause the downfall of the industrial supremacy of England, has awakened a universal desire to discover some source of supply independent of what they consider a toppling institution. The increase of this species of property, in its most objectionable form, by a revival of the Slave Trade, would certainly not tend to increase their confidence. That the South does enjoy to a certain extent, a monopoly of cotton is, perhaps, true; and it is not surprising that so novel a situation should cause uneasiness. It generally happens, and perhaps, fortunately for mankind at large, that the production of an article exceeds the demand; and the

excess of abundant years is thus stored up to meet the deficiencies of short crops. The prices are consequently regulated by the consumer—not the producer—who must be content with just what he can get; hence the continual struggle by producers to obtain control of the prices through the agency of tariffs. Agricultural nations have thus been generally subject to the consumers of their products, and at the same time the prey of those who produce articles which they do not. The Southern States have never yet asked this unjust interference of government in their behalf; and it would seem a judgment from Heaven, that they alone, of all the nations on the earth, should enjoy a monopoly. Is it probable that any attempt will be successfully made to deprive them of this monopoly, which could be thwarted by the revival of the Slave Trade? It is not pretended that we have any other rivals to fear than Brazil and the East. As to the former, it is sufficient to say that it is a slave power; and its late legislation shows, that in a few years the slave trade will either be suppressed entirely or re-opened. If the latter, there is no reason for our interference; if the former, then it would be subject to the same disadvantages as our own country, with the addition of an inferior climate and an inferior population. There is nothing, then, to fear from this quarter. In the East there is still less cause for uneasiness; cheap labor they have, and have had there—far cheaper than ours; and great efforts have been made to foster the cultivation of cotton, but the result has, as yet, been a failure. For this, a combination of many causes has been assigned; the most gratifying, as well as the most conclusive, being the unsuitable nature of the climate, which is invincible. But if such were the situation of affairs a year ago, how much less cause to fear rivalry exists now, when the British India Empire is shown to be a pyramid, resting on its apex of a few Europeans, who, by the laws of climate, cannot found a race, with a base of hundreds of millions of fanatical and inimical natives. Besides, the cotton of India is of so inferior a quality as to be almost a different article—it cannot comply with the requisitions of the market now; still less will it be able to do so, as luxury increases and finer stuffs of pure cotton, or articles adulterated with cotton are demanded. A planter of Sea Island might as well express apprehension as to extended cultivation of the short staple, as an American planter about the India cotton. It cannot even inspire us with a secret wish for the downfall of the British dominion; our interest and the voice of humanity concur in desiring its stability. Wherever that nation carries its arms and institutions, liberty for the dominant race and material prosperity for all, go with them; and the consumption of American

Is it probable that we can be deprived of our monopoly.



cotton seems to be an equally inseparable concomitant. But even suppose that the East did send to Europe a considerable quantity of its inferior product, there would still be little ground for fear. In proportion as civilization and refinement penetrate the masses of Western Europe, experience shows that agricultural labor becomes distasteful; such is also the case in the Northern portions of this Confederacy; the increase of the population is found to be principally in the cities and towns; and in France, the rural population is even decreasing. The causes of this movement exist in the nature of their civilization, and will continue to exist, as could be shown, if it were necessary. This city population must be mainly supported by manufacturing; and, in the course of time, long after we have been gathered to our fathers, perhaps the whole of that Continent will present the spectacle, now furnished by England, of an immense mass, not compelled, yet ready to enter upon the manufacture, and to receive our staples upon our own terms. The inferior cotton of India would be swallowed up in this demand, while our short staple would occupy towards it the same relation which now exists between Sea Island and the short staple. Certainly no situation could be more agreeable. The undersigned has not discussed the necessity of this monopoly, as it is called; he has contented himself with showing that whether or not, it be necessary, we are in no danger of losing it. If then, there is no great evil impending over South Carolina, which a reduction in the price of cotton could avert, the question again recurs who will receive the benefit of this reduction, and the inevitable is, the British purchaser. His gains will be certain and immediate; ours, at best, contingent and prospective. Thus, after years of toil, spent in convincing the world of the propriety of the Slave Trade, or, in trampling their prejudices under foot—after revolutionizing and remodelling, with infinite risk, one of our most important social institutions; after filling our fair land with hideous barbarians, we find the barren result of our labors to be an increase in the profits of our bitterest foes, whose only sympathy with us is through the pocket. Oh! most lame and impotent conclusion! which every one, despite the threatening shades of India and Egypt, must hope will never be realized. So much for the argument of cheap cotton.

Manufacturers alone would profit.

2d. Argument—that we suffer under a deficiency of negro labour—considered.

Another prominent argument in favor of this measure is, that at present labor is gradually transferred from South Carolina to the West, and that this emigration finds its only remedy in a corresponding immigration or importation. That a very considerable emigration, both of whites and blacks, from the Atlantic States to the valley of the Mississippi, exists, is undoubtedly true, whether to the

injurious extent represented, cannot be positively ascertained until 1860. It is scarcely greater than in the decade from 1840 to 1850, during which period, the slave population of South Carolina increased from three hundred and twenty-seven thousand and thirty-eight to three hundred and eighty-four thousand eight hundred and eight, being eighteen per cent., notwithstanding the great drain upon it. Moving pictures have been drawn of mansions crumbling, plantations gone to ruin, &c., &c., from want of labor. It has not been the fortune of the undersigned, in his journeys through the State, to find these statements substantiated by the facts; on the contrary, prosperity is everywhere visible, everywhere lands have risen in value, everywhere wealth is accumulating, and were it not for the draft upon our resources by the summer absenteeism, the invested capital would be immense. Certainly no portion of the United States has developed more rapidly and solidly than the valley of the French Broad since the attention of summer travellers has been turned in that direction. But, suppose the fact to be as stated, that this industrial exhaustion really exists. Does the revival of the Slave Trade offer a remedy? The agricultural staples of South Carolina are three—rice, Sea Island cotton and upland cotton. The rice cultivation is confined to a small strip of territory, commencing with Cape Fear and ending with certain rivers in Georgia. The crop is not very great compared with the general production of breadstuffs among the nations with whom we are in commercial communication; it is not a necessary of life, but belongs rather to the class of semi-luxuries; it is not a subject of speculation, and each individual consumer requires but little; no one ever curtails his consumption on account of the increase in price. Owing to these circumstances and the superior quality of the Carolina article, it is a real monopoly, as is proved by the high price of rice lands. The cost of the item of labor is, therefore, a matter of comparative indifference to the planter; the consumer, not he, pays for it. It is not pretended that any one will move West to cultivate this staple cheaper than here, simply because similar lands are not to be obtained there. This staple then, stands aloof from the present question an indifferent spectator. The next is Sea Island cotton, which occupies, in all essential features, the same position as rice. The territory suitable for its cultivation being limited to a few Islands along the coast, is absolutely without a rival, unless we except Algiers, which, as yet, has been an experiment, and a very sickly one. The idea of moving elsewhere to cultivate this staple is consequently preposterous; it always has been, and always will be, a monopoly. Its use is confined to manufactures of luxury. As the old distinctions of

Would the  
slave trade  
offer an ad-  
equato rem-  
edy for the  
transfer to  
the West.

Rice Crop.

Sea Island  
Cotton.



birth, rank and intellect, having lost their political influence, disappear socially under the jealousy of commerce, wealth alone will be desirable, and parvenus, but more particularly their females will be anxious to assert its privileges by a display of profusion, especially since from the equal subdivision of property among heirs, and the universal prodigality of the second generation, it is nearly impossible to transmit riches to posterity. This state of things leads directly to great extravagance in dress; such has long been the case at the North, and the same fate is reserved for Western Europe. Now Sea Island cotton is almost entirely consumed, in ministering to this vanity, and as it increases and its base widens (such is the tendency of modern equality) so will the demand for this staple increase. The cost of labor is therefore a matter of indifference to the planter, as it is paid eventually by those to whom such an item of expense would be trifling. We hear no talk of Sea Islands deserted, and there is still less prospect of such an event in the future. Indeed, there are no evils to apprehend for this class of our population, except those which result from excessive wealth.

Upland  
Cotton.

Cause of  
this transfer  
of negroes.

Is the greater  
product-  
iveness of  
the land.

Slave trade  
no remedy  
for this.

The last staple is upland cotton, and it must be here that this ruin is visible, if it exist at all. Leaving to others the task of making a diagnosis of the disease under which the body politic is said to labor, let us inquire what has produced this emigration of slaves. The elements of price are three: 1st. The passive element of production, viz: land and its incidents. 2nd. The active element of production, viz: labor and its incidents, and 3rd. Transportation. If capital flow to the West it must be because one of these elements is more efficient there than here. It cannot be the 3rd; transportation is no cheaper there than here, but the contrary. Neither can it be the 2nd, for a slave is as efficient here as there, nor is there any labor saving machinery known to them, the use of which is debarred to us. The advantage then, which causes the scale to preponderate in their favor must be connected with the 1st element, viz: the land, and it is undoubtedly true, that in a considerable portion of the South West, a given quantity of land will produce a greater amount of cotton, owing partly to its virgin soil, partly to its greater natural adaptation to this plant. Having thus ascertained the cause of this transfer of capital, the question is, will the revival of the Slave Trade afford a remedy. It must be premised that the importation of Africans, by destroying the bond of affection, which attaches the master to his slave will render this species of property, more mobile and sensitive to the call of profitable investment. Now, the revival of the Slave Trade will be without influence on the first element; it will neither make the land in

South Carolina more fertile, nor that on the Red River less so; hence this element will remain unaffected. Neither will it affect greatly the third element, transportation. It will, by supposition, affect the second, it will render negroes cheaper all over the South. But this is not sufficient, it is the relative not the absolute effect that is desired, it must render them cheaper here than there, to restore the balance which we are said to have lost. Will it? The cost of transporting a slave from Guinea to New Orleans will be no greater than to Charleston. No reason can be given why it should be, and none exists. The 1st and 3rd. elements, then, will remain as they were before; the second will be affected, but not unequally, and the same inequality in the first element which causes the transfer of capital now, will continue to do so then. The slave trade then, will not afford a remedy. Is there, therefore, none? Far from it. Time itself will eventually rectify the evil, by the joint process of raising the lands of the West to their proper value and by wearing them out. The equality between the cotton lands and the rice lands in Carolina, has been restored in this manner, so that there is now no emigration from one to the other. But there is another remedy much more worthy of a statesman's ambition, which consists in rendering any one, or all three of the elements of price, more efficient at home. Take the first element, can the production of land of certain natural fertility be increased profitably to the owner? The reply to this question has been developed into a great science owing to the very necessity of which complaint is now made, the problem being with a given amount of land and labor to increase the production, and nations vie with each other in attaining satisfactory solutions; improvement is rarely attempted upon virgin lands, but we have reached the point where such improvement is required and will be profitable, as is evidenced by the formation of Agricultural Societies, and other steps lately taken in this direction; a vigorous impulse only, is needed to stimulate an individual activity which would cause throughout the State, two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before. The undersigned has been informed, that an experiment lately made in Edgefield, has caused lands, once considered worthless, to be ranked now among the best in the district. Nor are such experiments costly, the most powerful agent—the intellect—existing already but in a state of inactivity. This is, moreover, the true road to national wealth; an increase in the amount of labor may be merely transitory: it may take to itself wings and fly away, but the improvement of land becomes a part of the land itself; it is permanent and can never escape. As the first so is the second element susceptible of infinite improve-

The true  
remedy.



ment. Educate the slave to efficiency, teach him that it is his interest to cultivate properly the estate, which supports him and his master alike; make the Carolina slave in his position of life, what the Carolina freeman aspires to be in his, preserve him from the contamination of native Africa vice and idleness, furnish him with the best agricultural implements suited to his capacity, let science and ingenuity aid his physical power and moderate intellect, and a great step will be taken in restoring the balance of productiveness. It is needless to say, that the revival of the Slave Trade, filling the land with stupid and ignorant laborers, would be an absolute bar to any improvement of this sort. The 3rd. element is equally susceptible with the others of improvement, by extending the means of communication, and by increasing through economy and energy in the administration, the efficiency of those already in existence. But it is scarcely necessary in this age of Railroads, to dwell upon the advantage of cheap transportation. It thus appears, that the revival of the Slave Trade would not remedy the evil here complained of, but would rather aggravate it by preventing the adoption of really efficient measures.

3d. Argument—that it is for the advantage of the poor non-slaveholder.

Another argument has been used in respectable quarters which is approached with reluctance, and considered only because its dangerous tendency imposes the duty of meeting it directly and promptly. It is said, that this measure is for the advantage of the poor non-slaveholder, and hinted that the opposition to it springs from a determination on the part of slaveholders, to prevent the participation by their poor fellow-citizens, in the enjoyment of this description of property, and to maintain a species of slave aristocracy. Many of those who advocate the measure would, doubtless, repudiate with horror such an argument, reiterating in substance as it does, the most offensive slander of the abolition press; but as it has been used once, so it will probably be used again if necessary to success. The effect is to place the non-slaveholders in opposition to the slaveholders and to generate that worst of contests—one of property. Of all arguments advanced, this is at once the weakest and the most dangerous. It is said that the price of labor will be reduced, and hence the poor non-slaveholder can purchase a negro. If the non-slaveholder is poor he has no source of wealth but his own labor, yet the very argument admits that the effect of the Slave Trade will be to cheapen labor. In proportion then, as the labor to be bought is cheapened, so also, will be cheapened the labor that is to buy, and though the article to be purchased, costs only half as much, yet the capacity of the poor non-slaveholder to purchase will be only half as great. It would require an exceeding ingenuity to show how his situ-

ation has been improved. The argument, however, will doubtless have a certain degree of weight with those for whom it was intended, and must be met there. If then, the slaveholders would lose, and the poor non-slaveholder would not gain, who would? The remaining class is that of rich non-slaveholders, and since this is a very small portion of the community, it is needless to discuss the impropriety of sacrificing nine-tenths to the other one.

Were the undersigned, then, to regard only the arguments in favor of this measure, he would be opposed to it, as a mere experiment, doubtful and with feeble promise of advantage; but when the objections are also taken into consideration, the conclusion becomes irresistible.

Conclusion  
as to the  
arguments  
in its favor.

In the first place, consider the number of Africans which it will be necessary to import for the attainment of any given end—take the end proposed; the reduction in the price of slave staples (which will include the one of increasing the amount of slave labor,) and suppose it be desirable to decrease these prices any given ratio, say one-half. Now, the number of slaves in the United States is about four millions. As it is necessary, of course, to double the amount of labor, the importation of at least an equal number of Africans from Guinea will be required. But, as we have already seen, the increase of labor in this case, is not proportionate to the increase of laborers. From what the undersigned has seen in the West Indies, coinciding with the experience of those who have had better opportunities of comparing American slaves with native Africans, the conclusion drawn of one-half in favor of the superior efficiency of the former is not too great; one-third is certainly within bounds; three Americans are surely equal to four Africans; the number then, to be imported, will be  $\frac{4}{3}$  of four millions. The value of our slaves in a mere industrial point of view, will also be depreciated by contamination at least  $\frac{1}{4}$ , equal one million, which will require an additional importation of  $\frac{4}{3}$  of one million, in all equal to  $\frac{4}{3}$  of four millions, plus to  $\frac{4}{3}$  of one million. Nor is this all. We have seen that labor is but one of the elements of price; to reduce the price of any article one-half, it is necessary to reduce the cost, not only of one, but all its elements. Now, we have seen that the Slave Trade will not affect the first element, the land, nor to any great extent the third, the transportation. but only the second, the labor. It follows, then, that the effect produced by the Slave Trade upon this last element must not only be equal to one-half of itself, but also compensate for its inefficiency as to the other two. It is difficult to express the result in figures, because the statistics do not furnish the means of ascertaining the proportion contributed to

Objections.

Number  
which it will  
be necessary  
to import.



the price by each element; but two-fifths would scarcely be too great a proportion for the land and transportation, leaving three-fifths for the labor alone. The reduction upon this 2-5 (equal to 2-3 of the labor element) is to be accomplished by the same means, that is, an additional importation of 2-3 of 4 millions of American slaves will be required, which by the previous calculation, is equal to 4-3 of 2-3 of 4 millions of Africans. Hence the grand total of importation to accomplish a reduction of 1-2 in the price of slave staples will be 4-3 of 4 millions, plus 4-3 of 1 million, plus 4-3 of 2-3 of 4 millions, equal to 10 2-9 millions. The result will doubtless be surprising to those who are in the habit of reasoning loosely on such subjects, and of considering political problems as involving only one condition, and to be solved by simple arithmetic alone, whereas the calculus would be a much more suitable instrument of investigation. Not that the undersigned believes for a moment, that the project would go thus far; quite the contrary; he has given the measure the benefit of every possible contingency, of supposing that the action of the laws of trade upon this commerce would be healthy, and that the decrease in the price of the product would be proportioned only to the decrease in the cost of production; whereas, long before the cupidity of the King of Dahomey or the philanthropy of the slave trader, were satisfied, the market would be glutted, slave labor worthless, and incubus upon the country, the price of its products barely above the point of physical subsistence owing to the necessary competition among producers. We should see again, the times of 1844-5, cotton down to 5 or 6 cents, the English manufacturer bloated with wealth and the Planter scarcely able to purchase provisions or clothing for his slaves.

Character of  
these.

Having thus formed some opinion as to the number of Africans, which it will be necessary to import in order to produce an appreciable effect upon our economical situation, it is advisable next, to consider the character of this population, with which the land is to be filled. From the conscientious and respectable Wilberforce down to the "scrub" Yankee agitator of the present day, it has been the cant of Abolitionists to dwell upon the native African, as a paragon of all the virtues combined in the human breast; his kindness, humanity, attachment to the domestic ties have been portrayed in florid colors. This is but the voice of fanaticism; the impartial world cannot be always blind to the truth. In his native land, the African is a barbarian. A faint attempt at society, founded, it is true, upon the sword, and some notion of the culinary art alone lift him above the savage; in all other important respects they are alike. Even his society is but a series of despotisms; each superior grade being absolute master of

that beneath it; laws and self-control are unknown, and cruelty is esteemed an appropriate manner of manifesting the most elevating emotions—religion, grief, joy for victory. It is needless to refer to the sanguinary “customs” so often described by travellers. Polygamy, theft, violence and falsehood, are virtues; nothing is so ennobling as the gratification of revenge, and the more cruel the means, the more credit to the actor. The shedding of blood is grateful to their God, whose attributes are of the most bestial description. A violent death is the natural and anticipated end of a vicious life. Add to this a dislike of foreigners as manifested in the assassination of travellers, and we have a faithful picture of negro life at home. Between them and us there is no sympathy, no point of contact; our system of civilization and theirs of barbarism cannot exist side by side; one must yield. In Africa, death to the European is the method of reconciling this incompatibility. Such is the population, which, chattering a foreign tongue, is to be distributed in myriads throughout the land.

It cannot be supposed that this vast and novel influx would affect our slaves only in an economical point of view. All history and ex-<sup>Effect upon</sup> our slaves. perience teach that the infusion of an inferior class of beings in the midst of those who, from whatever cause are their superiors, is detrimental. Had not that crowd of wretched foreigners and barbarians flowed into Rome during the latter days of the Republic, and by contamination, corrupted the Roman Plebs, she had never lost her liberties. Her regeneration required the invasion of another race, rude, is true, but hardy in all the virtues that form the strength of manhood. We have seen the position in the scale of existence, occupied by the native African, it is not venturing upon debateable ground to assign a totally different and higher position to the American slave. The foundation of character is doubtless the same, but here every influence is brought to develop its favorable, there its unfavorable side; here his vices are repressed by force, if need be, there they procure him distinction and importance; here he is elevated and sustained by an all-powerful civilization, there the effect of natural barbarism keeps him to a stagnant level. Indeed, so completely has a residence of several generations in a christian land altered his being, that but for his intellectual inferiority, his color, and his want of the power to stand alone, the American slave would scarcely be recognized as of the same race. Labor is no longer so essentially repugnant to his disposition, as to necessitate the continual terror of the lash to force him to its discharge. He feels an interest in the soil upon which he works, and recognizes the solidarity existing between himself and his owner. He is attached to the family when treated with kindness, is proud of



his young master and mistress, and who greeted us on our return home during the school vacations, with a warmer welcome or a more beaming face than the old servants of the household. He is unacquainted with the pleasures and pains of freedom, nor has he ever seen his own race in that position, with the exception of a few wretched half-breeds, that linger about, exciting neither his respect nor his envy. He regards the white man as something superior; considers liberty as peculiar to him, and not within the reach of the slave. Hence he has but little aspiration towards that which he cannot by any possibility attain. Nature has created him to obey the commands of a superior, and the thought of resistance rarely crosses his mind otherwise than as a mere transient idea, excited by some peculiar circumstance. Obedience has consequently become a part of his nature; he obeys not from fear, but from education. His moral nature is instructed; he is no longer a mere animal of toil; he knows the difference between right and wrong; that because he is a slave, he is not therefore free from the obligations of duty, but is responsible as a moral agent.— True he has not the intellect to comprehend the great truths of Christianity, but it has teachings suited even to his capacity, and it will require exceeding hardihood to deny the weight of such considerations. In the midst of this people, of whom we are the moral, as well as the physical guardians, it is proposed to introduce a class of creatures in all essential developments entirely different, who do not what they are commanded, but what they are forced to do, who recognize no duties, who have never heard of laws, to whom industry is unknown, who are yet to learn that treachery and blood-shedding are wrong, who have been torn from their native land, and transferred to a strange soil and a strange climate, to obey the behests of a strange master. What will be the effect upon our slaves? Those who anticipate only the elevation of the barbarian, have sadly misread history, and particularly the history of this race. There are races in the world capable, apparently, of indefinite self-development, as the Celtic, the Teutonic; others have this power up to a certain degree, as the Egyptians, and perhaps the Chinese; others are without it, and prominently among them the negro race. They receive all light from above; it is not only necessary that they should be subjected to good influences, but to none save good influences. The tendency of such is always downwards, and evil communications will corrupt more than good examples can improve. Hence it is, that our planters make such a point of sending an incorrigible negro entirely out of the State. The great improvement which we, under Providence, have been the means of effecting, is owing to the fact that the slave-trade never flourished in America,

and for many years has been suppressed. Re-open this flood gate of impurity, and all that we have accomplished in half a century would be lost; the cheapest defence of our institution would be sacrificed to a mere experiment, the good and the bad would be irrevocably confounded, and what would be the moral specific gravity of the compound it is distasteful to conjecture. So much for the effect upon our slaves.

As masters, we would have still less reason to be gratified with the result. In the present condition of South Carolina, agricultural life is preferred by the great majority of her citizens, and is recommended by many other considerations than mere pecuniary interest. They are loth to yield up or desert the homes of their forefathers. They find that their natural feelings of independence are gratified, by treading habitually their own grounds; that their children grow up in a purer atmosphere, far from the temptations of city life. The Commonwealth, too, derives an advantage in the possession of a hardy, self-reliant, refined and educated body of citizens, who are, perhaps, more warmly attached to her soil, from owning it, and directly superintending its cultivation. But to the existence of this class of population, the certainty of security to isolated families is an absolute requisite. Hence, it exists only in countries such as England and the United States, which have generally been free from the curse of foreign invasion and internal violence; while in France, Spain, &c., &c., it is unknown, with the occasional exception of some feudal Baron, who still keeps up an army of retainers, sufficient to ensure his castle against a surprise. One of the charms of plantation life consists in the pleasant intercourse between master and slave; characterized, as it generally is, by the kindness of feeling on both sides. The introduction of half a million raw Africans, such as have been described, would quickly alter this state of things. The idea of leaving one's family, even for a day, amid a mass of barbarians—vicious, unruly, discontented, accustomed to the rule of force, speaking a different language, and never having learned to regard their master as their friend—would be revolting to human nature. We would gradually come to live as in the West Indies and Europe; proprietors would cluster in cities and villages, paying only occasional visits to their property; plantations would soon be held in copartnership, as investments, and the only interest felt would be in the factor's balance. The owner would cease to disturb himself about the moral or physical condition of his slave. How could he sympathize with creatures with whom he could not even converse? How could he expose his children to a gang of savages, accustomed to poison or to murder; or, if he had been so unlucky as to purchase out of a nation of that description—

Effect upon  
the masters.



to cannibalism? If perchance his servants died from cruelty, or over work, in his absence, the slave trade would offer a cheap substitute, and there would be no neighborhood of gentlemen to brand him with public opinion. We would soon be driven to all those appliances, which are necessary where force is acknowledged to be the only lever of government. That such a change would take place cannot be doubted. To pronounce it desirable would be to offer a senseless indignity to every owner of a plantation; for though, in argument with strangers, we frequently treat the bond between master and slave—ensuring protection to the one and obedience to the other—as merely pecuniary; yet, we confess to ourselves, that this mode of defending the institution is forced upon us by the necessity of selecting such considerations as will be appreciated by our opponents; while every slaveholder would be indignant at the thought that those by whom he had been surrounded from his youth, had no other claim upon him than his horse or his ox. The injurious effect of the Slave Trade, under this aspect, would be more severely felt in the parishes than in the hill country—owing to the great preponderance of the slave population, which always has existed there, and from the nature of the climate, always will exist.

Effect upon  
the State.

If the relation of individual owners towards their slaves would be affected, not less would be the change in the relation of society to the subject masses in its bosom. It is a universal opinion abroad, that we retain our authority through the ignorance of our slaves as to their real strength; exactly the reverse is the case: we hold it undisputed—because of their knowledge of their real strength. An ignorant man is controlled only by visible exhibition of power; it requires education—and a considerable degree of education—to enable him to comprehend obedience to the law, as such; to enable him to see, in the sheriff, not an individual man, nor the leader of an armed posse, but the representative of the latent force of a whole society. This is an idea inculcated by knowledge—not ignorance. Prussia is a striking instance of the power of education, in causing a nation of brave men to submit to an unlimited military despotism. Were our slaves ignorant savages, we would, indeed, hold our individual lives by sufferance. Visible power and authority they would respect, and nothing else; hence, it would be necessary to render power visible—unseen, it would be despised. Moreover, nations, as well as individuals, can be educated to obedience, and the opposite. An African, whose ancestors have delighted his youth with tales of war and resistance to control, grows up with this sentiment strong in his breast; the American slave, who has never heard, save of peaceable submis-

sion, is naturally inclined to submit. Some nations, by being often conquered, have been thus rendered permanent cowards, and flee at the sight of a soldier or a policeman. We suck in rebellion or obedience with our mother's milk. The Americans afford an illustration of this principle. Perhaps no nation on the globe is more high tempered, restless, excitable and violent in resistance to illegitimate authority, than the inhabitants of these Southern States; yet, none submit with more cheerfulness and alacrity to the commands of the law, however disagreeable. The American General at the head of a conquering army in Mexico, with a prostrate nation at his feet, was ordered to lay down his command and appear before a court martial; he unhesitatingly obeyed the mandate; Mexicans were unable to comprehend such conduct; an American would have been incapable of comprehending any other; the one had been educated to law, the other to anarchy. Our slaves have been subjected to the same influences as ourselves; they obey, without question, the law of their position; and as a remarkable consequence, there has not been a commotion in the slave population of this, the most decidedly slave State in the Union, since the suppression of the Trade, with the single exception of 1822, which was entirely owing to emissaries from the West Indies; and was, moreover, much exaggerated in the reports of the time. Nor is it probable that another will ever take place? A partial outbreak they, of course, will not make; and the same knowledge which would fit them for a general insurrection, will most effectually deter them, by showing its utter futility. With the introduction of savages, a new night would descend; the very ignorance by which they would be incapacitated for a grand scheme, would urge them to outrages, individual and concerted, of a minor character, for which an unknown tongue would afford convenient means of concealment. Thefts, murders, plantation riots, would be the order of the day, until the old West India system was introduced, to which we would soon be driven.

Such would be the natural effect of the realization of this project, upon slaves, slaveholders, and the community at large. Experience corroborates these deductions. The awful character of Roman Slavery, where the bond of duty was not correlative, and where it was, consequently, not considered improper to expose such slaves as had outlived the period of active labor, to starve on an island in the Tiber, is well known, and it is also well known that its worst features were developed by the wars of the Republic, which, by reducing whole nations of barbarians to captivity, produced effects similar to those of the modern Slave Trade. But it is useless to in-

Experience  
of history.



Of the ante-  
revolutionary  
history of  
this State.

investigate a system, which, in its practical operations, has so little similarity to our own. The West India system, in its origin and general features, offers many more points of contact, yet we know that there the slave was considered a mere instrument of labor; that the problem was at a given price, to extort from him the greatest amount of work; that the average length of his life, was seven years, at the end of which his place was supplied with a new African; that the idea of any other than a mere economical relation between them, never entered into the brain of either—the negro exchanged an African for an American master, whether the exchange were beneficial depended upon circumstances—that one desideratum was to prevent his killing himself or his master, being from his barbarous nature, prone to do both; that the means of control were suited to the nature of the authority; chains, cartwhips, swords, barracons were in ordinary use on every plantation. Certainly there was an essential difference between their system and ours. Nor is the history of Carolina devoid of the teachings of experience to those who are willing to be taught. One peculiarity of the ante-revolutionary system, was the great apprehension manifested of certain offences, which now rarely occur, or if so, are not attended with serious consequences. Runaways seem to have been, as in the West Indies, great objects of dread; every variety of punishment was invented to deter them, and perhaps not without reason, as contemporaneous narratives show them to have filled the woods, and to have been of the most desperate character, recognizable only by the brand of their owner burnt in upon them. Another was the continual fear of insurrection, for which there was ample justification. Another was the cruel corporeal nature of the punishments prescribed. A glance at the statute book, will bring these facts into relief.

Offering violence to a christian white person, was punished, for the second offence, by splitting the nose and burning the face, for the third offence, death. (A. A. 1690, sec. 1., A. A. 1712, sec. 17.) For petty larceny, the punishment was, second offence, cutting off the ear, or branding on the forehead; third offence, splitting the nose; fourth offence, death. (A. A. 1712, sec. 10.)

Every Captain was required to pursue and capture a runaway, dead or alive. (A. A. 1690, sec. 9.) For the first offence, the punishment was whipping; for the second, branding with the letter R.; for the third, cutting off the ear; for the fourth, gelding; for the fifth, cutting off one leg, or death. (A. A. 1712, sec. 19.)

The Act of 1751, reciting that poisonings had become very frequent, proceeds to denounce an especial punishment upon that horrible crime, &c., &c., &c.

Indeed the punishments upon slaves were entirely different from those now existing, and from those imposed at the time upon the whites—an appeal being made in the one case to the body, in the other to the moral nature. Most of the offences above mentioned have disappeared, or have ceased to excite apprehension, and the penalties have been forgotten, in so much that few know they ever existed.—What was the reason of this change? Why is it that our government of slaves is so different from what it was in the last century, or is now in the West Indies? Something is undoubtedly due to the progress of the world, and to the fact, that we have been subjected to all the elevating influences of republican government, which has taught us the difficult lesson of self-restraint. Knowing no superior, we are free from that petty tyranny, so universally characteristic of those who have themselves a master. It is a pardonable vanity to suppose this form of government best calculated to develop all that is noble and generous in a people. But our ancestors, though not republicans, were in most respects free as ourselves. Neither can this difference be ascribed to their former cruelty of disposition. Refinement and humanity were their possession in England and France, and were cherished by them also in the forests of America. Bigotry and savage intolerance formed no part of their character; they were not witch-burners or quaker-hangers, nor did they in the mere wantonness of despotism enact unnecessary Blue Laws. In all their troubles they never forgot that their origin was in the upper, not the lower classes of the fatherland. Indeed, it was found necessary to impose in these very statutes, heavy penalties upon such masters as should neglect or refuse to inflict the cruel punishments prescribed, proving that they were revolting to the spirit of individuals, but deemed by the collective legislative wisdom necessary to the security of the State. But it is useless to speculate upon the causes of this severity; they are set forth in the preambles to the statutes themselves—that to the Act of 1712 is as follows: “Whereas the plantations and estates of “this Province cannot be well and sufficiently managed and brought “into use without the labor and service of negroes, and other slaves, “and forasmuch as the negroes and other slaves brought among the “people of this Province for that purpose are of barbarous, wild and “savage natures, such as renders them wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws, customs and practices of this Province, but that “it is absolutely necessary that such other constitutions, laws and orders should in this Province be made and enacted for the good regulating and ordering of them, as may restrain the disorders, rapines “and inhumanity to which they are naturally prone and inclined, and

Cause of this difference.



"may also tend to the safety and security of the people of this Province and their estates, Be it therefore, &c., &c." That to the A. A. of 1740, says, "Whereas, the great importation of negroes from the coast of Africa, who are generally of a barbarous and savage disposition, may hereafter prove of very dangerous consequence to the peace and safety of this Province, and which we have now more reason to be apprehensive of, from the late rising in rebellion of a great number of negroes, lately imported into this Province from the coast of Africa, in the thickest settlements of this Province, and barbarously murdering upwards of twenty persons of his Majesty's faithful subjects of this Province, within about twenty miles from the Capital of this Province, &c., &c." The preambles to various Acts are substantially the same. Here, then, we have this mystery revealed. We at length understand why a runaway should be so fearful a character; why poisonings should be so common as to attract especial legislative notice; why petty larceny should be so incorrigible. The African was of "a barbarous, wild and savage nature," "naturally prone to disorders, rapines and inhumanity," in his own country; transferring him among a people whom he did not know, and with whom he could not converse, did not alter these traits. Accustomed to obey only visible manifestations of brute force, it was necessary to adopt the same machinery here to accomplish the same end; hence, the cutting off of ears, branding, splitting of noses, cutting off of legs. It was necessary to appeal to his physical senses. What did he know of duty? What did he care for a moral rebuke? He must see his blood flow. That had always been in his eyes the appropriate method of manifesting disapprobation, and that alone did he comprehend.—Such a character, escaped into the swamps, was, indeed, a terror to the neighborhood; famishing with hunger, without the means of speech, which might enable him to impose on a passer-by—restrained by no idea of right or wrong, he plunged at night, like a ravenous wolf, on sleeping households, or attacked in bands, with staves and poles, the unwary traveller. What hope was there of permanently reforming such a creature from theft? The offending member must be cut off on slight provocation, lest it infect the sound. Such was the surgery requisite, and such was the surgery employed.

The military  
point of  
view

The regulations for securing the province against insurrections, (mere local affairs it is true, but very bloody,) originated in the same causes, slave huts were to be carefully searched at certain periods for concealed weapons, guns, clubs, &c., &c.; every master was required to keep his gun "in the most private and least frequented room in the house," every white man under sixty, was to go to church with, and

carry into the church," his musket and six rounds, and the Church Wardens were to enforce this regulation ; penalties were imposed upon the neglect to comply with these laws. Nor need the apprehension of our ancestors seem idle ; surrounded by a population as they have described it, such precautions were eminently necessary, and were tested on more than one occasion. The West Indies furnish a lamentable instance of the folly of filling the country with a preponderating number of barbarians. In Jamaica, for instance, the ratio in 1821, is said to have been as 28,000 whites to 345,000 slaves. Consequently, when the mother country, like Saturn of old, raised her hand to destroy them, they succumbed without a struggle ; the disjointed fragments of their former society floated awhile upon a sea of enemies, and then disappeared forever. In those Islands, where the contest lay between master and slave, similar causes produced similar results. It would be woful statesmanship to overlook this effect of a revival of the slave trade, when the history of our own country, and the West Indies, shows that in such an event, commotions must be frequent, and will always be excited by discontented Africans. The great Jamaica Rebellion of 1760 commenced on a plantation, where the slaves had been well treated, and was entirely owing to a negro, who had been a chief in his own country, and was hence particularly restive in slavery. Nor do we enjoy an immunity from foreign invasion. Suppose, then, the revival of the slave trade to be accompanied by all its anticipated advantages, that the whites be merely the directors, each of a great number of slaves, in the ratio of directing to executing power ; suppose this to be the only occupation for a white man, we should be confronted by the fatal example of the West Indies, where this system existed in perfection, where the masters were afraid to appeal to arms against the mother country, lest a decree of emancipation should raise a wave of barbaric ferocity to overwhelm them. Such a state of things would render us as it did them, slothful, idle, sensual, without energy or the capacity of resistance, and exposed to the insults of every opponent. In a mere military point of view, then, the slave trade would work a serious injury by surrounding our hearths with a race who would be enemies in peace and in war.

Another and most important lesson is taught us by history. It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of Africans imported into the West Indies since the opening of the trade, but it is probably greater than supposed ; some have estimated it for the British Islands alone at 1,700,000, others at 2,100,000 ; others higher still. After 178 years, but 780,993 remained to be registered for emancipation. Be-

Its effect upon the increase of the Slave population.



tween 1680 and 1776 a period of ninety-six years, 800,000 negroes, it is said, were imported into Santo Domingo; at the latter date 290,800 remained. The decrease in Cuba has been estimated by competent authorities at from five to ten per cent. per annum. Thus statistics disclose the fearful fact, that in a climate similar to their own, surrounded by tropical abundance, the African slave population has not even preserved itself in the course of nature, but despite the continued renovation, has decreased at the rate of hundreds per cent. in the century. The fact is universally admitted, and in the British Parliament was urged by the advocates of the Slave Trade as an argument for keeping open a source of supply. In the United States a gratifying difference meets the view. The whole number imported has been estimated at 400,000. Since the year 1790 the increase has been at the rate of twenty-eight per cent. for every decade, and the actual number is now some four millions. By reference to the character of the importation, this fact will be placed in a still more striking point of view. For obvious reasons the Africans imported are seldom without the ages of fifteen and forty, thus in the prime of life, and best calculated to increase the population among which they are diffused. The proportion of female slaves in the United States, between these ages, is about twenty per cent. of the whole number of slaves, and of both males and females in like manner, about forty per cent.; the ratio of increase then to the latter, instead of twenty-eight would be seventy per cent., and to the former one hundred and forty per cent. for each decade. Now, why should the slave population decrease in a country similar to their own, and increase in one altogether different? What can have overcome the disadvantage of climate and produced such contrary results? So irreconcilable a difference in the result, must be owing to some radical difference between the two systems. They resemble each other in every respect but one, and that is the existence of the Slave Trade; under the one system it flourished without limitation, under the other it never existed to any great extent, was almost suppressed from 1790, and absolutely from 1808. In the one, the various considerations already alluded to, debarred the African from the benefit of his master's solicitude, while his cheapness deprived him of any hold upon the inferior motives. His original vices were not eradicated, they were merely accommodated to the new society in which he was placed; polygamy became promiscuous concubinage, brutal debaucheries undermined his health, and continued labor completed the work of ruin. In America the promptings of nature and self-interest alike contributed to produce the opposite result. Surrounded in his manhood by the descendants of those

who had cultivated the paternal acres in his youth, it was impossible for the American planter to be indifferent to their welfare; the kind feelings of early days were exchanged on the one hand for the respectful attachment and obedience of age, and on the other for a benevolent superintendence; nature revolted at treating one in such a connection as a mere instrument of toil. The ties of marriage were acknowledged and respected; the claims of helpless youth and feeble old age recognized, and not only moral, but physical wants supplied; if the cares of a parent sometimes failed, those of a master were ever present. Hence this rapid increase, which would be impossible under the grinding rule of a tyranny; the fact is at once the consequence and proof of the kindest treatment. Nor is the continuance of this situation dependant upon virtue alone, from the influence of which, a considerable portion of mankind would be exempt, for the dictates of worldly advantage counsel the same course to those who are devoid of the finer sensibilities; ill-treatment is sure to be followed by a loss, for which there is no Slave Trade to afford a cheap compensation. Both classes of owners are thus urged by the motives respectively most congenial to their natures to adopt the same course. Revive the Slave Trade and all this will vanish; we shall again find it necessary to prescribe by statute the manner of feeding slaves, lest they be compelled from want of nourishment, to seek refuge and subsistence in the forest.

In taking leave of this part of the subject, it will not be amiss to review cursorily the legislation of South Carolina, in reference to the question. The British, having wrested the Asiento from the Spaniards, extended greatly their commerce with Africa, and enjoyed until 1776, a monopoly of supplying the Carolina slave market. After the peace of 1783, the New Englanders obtained a participation in its profits. In the early history of the Colony individuals, mostly foreigners, holding high positions under the government, were interested in this traffic, and it flourished greatly, the evil effects of which were soon felt, as will be apparent from the statutes enacted. The A. A. of 1698, for the encouragement of the importation of white servants, after the following preamble:—"Whereas, the great number of negroes which have of late, been imported into this Colony, may endanger the safety thereof, if speedy measures be not taken, and encouragement given for the importation of white servants"—requires each planter to take one white servant for every six negroes, &c, &c.

Sketch of the  
legislation  
of the State  
upon this  
subject.

The A. A. of 1712, "for the more effectual preventing of the spreading of contagious disorders" rests upon the following foundation: "Whereas, great numbers of the inhabitants of this Province



have been destroyed by malignant, contagious diseases, brought here from Africa, and other parts of America, &c." Among those enumerated, are plague, spotted fever, Siam distemper and Guinea fever.

The A. A. of 1714, after the following preamble: "And whereas, the number of negroes do extremely increase in this Province, and through the afflicting Providence of God, the white persons do not proportionably multiply, by reason whereof the safety of the said Province is greatly endangered, for the prevention of which, for the future, &c., &c.," imposes an additional duty of £2 upon every slave over twelve years imported "from any part of Africa."

The A. A. of 1716, "to encourage the importation of white servants into this Province," after the preamble, "Whereas, said experience has taught us, that the small number of white inhabitants of this Province, is not sufficient to defend the same, even against our Indian enemies; and whereas, the number of slaves is daily increasing in this Province, which may likewise endanger the safety thereof, if speedy care be not taken to encourage the importation of white servants," requires planters to take one for every ten slaves, &c., &c.

The A. A. of 1717, after the preamble, "And whereas, the great importation of negroes into this Province, in proportion to the white inhabitants of the same, whereby the future safety of this Province will be greatly endangered, for the prevention thereof, &c., &c.," imposes an additional duty of £40 upon every negro slave, "of any age or condition, whatsoever, and from any part of the world."

The A. A. of 1744, "for the further preventing the spreading of malignant and contagious disorders," has the following preamble: "Whereas, it hath been found by experience, that since the importation of negroes and slaves from the coast of Africa into this Province, hath been prohibited, this Province in general, and Charleston in particular, hath been much more healthy than heretofore it hath been, &c., &c."

The A. A. of 1740, and the A. A. of 1751 following out the Act of 1716, imposes a tax upon the importation of slaves, to be devoted to the encouragement of white servants.

The A. A. of 1764, after the preamble "Whereas, the importation of negroes, equal in number to what have been imported of late years, may prove of the most dangerous consequence, in many respects, to this Province, and the best way to obviate such dangers, will be by imposing such additional duty upon them, as may totally prevent the evils," imposes an additional duty of £100.

The A. A. of 1787, enacts that no negro or other slave, shall be imported under the penalty of forfeiture, unless master come in to reside.

Another A. A. of 1787, both before the adoption of the Federal Constitution, enacts, "that any person importing or bringing into this State, a negro slave, contrary to the Act to regulate the recovery of debts, and prohibiting the importation of negroes, shall, besides the forfeiture of such negro or slave, be liable to a penalty of £100, in addition to the forfeiture, in and by said Act prescribed."

The A. A. of 1788, prohibits the importation of negroes or other slaves, unless at that time the property of citizens of the United States, and within the limits of the United States, under of forfeiture and £100.

The A. A. of 1792, after the preamble, "Whereas, it is deemed inexpedient to increase the number of slaves within the State, in our present circumstances and condition," prohibits the importation of slaves from Africa, the West Indies, or other places beyond seas, for two years.

By A. A. of 1794 extended to 1797.

The A. A. of 1796, after the preamble, "Whereas, it appears to be highly impolitic to import negroes from Africa, or other place beyond seas," prohibits such importation till 1799, under pain of forfeiture, and a fine upon the Captains.

By A. A. of 1798 extended to 1801.

And by A. A. of 1800 extended to 1803.

In 1803, all the existing Acts were repealed, and the restriction against importation was confined to South America, the West Indies, and the other States of the Confederacy, unless in case of the last, a certificate be filed with the Clerk of the Court "under the hands of two Magistrates, and the seal of the Clerk of the Court of the District, where the said negro or negroes have resided for the last twelve months, previous to the date of the certificate, that such negro or negroes, are persons of good character, and have not been concerned in any insurrection or rebellion."

It is apparent from this sketch, that the injurious tendency of the importation of barbarism, is not an idea originating with yankee abolitionists, and forced upon the reluctant South as a stigma; it was recognized in Carolina as far back as 1714; nor was it then, the creature of sickly and maudlin equivocators, who had neither the firmness to give up the institution which they deplored and excused, nor to follow it to its legitimate deductions. There was no hint of abolition, no distrust of slavery, but these sterling citizens had sufficient wisdom to perceive a vast difference between a system of civilized, and a system of barbarian slavery. The great historical Carolinians of 1789 and 1791, many of whom were violently opposed to this grant of power to the Federal Government, never supposed

Conclusions  
drawn  
therefrom.



themselves thereby committed to an approval of the slave trade, nor thought that their condemnation of this latter would be inconsistent with fidelity to the institution itself. They were keenly alive to the necessity of developing it at home, of keeping it free from all foreign impurities. Hence the preambles; hence the prohibitions of importation from Africa, or even from other sister States, unless with evidence of good character. The restriction against importation from Africa was removed a few years previous to 1808, but this was owing to the impossibility of preventing evasion of our laws, through the want of a State navy, and it was thought better to bring them directly from Africa, than receive them through New York, as pretended Americans; that the sentiment of the State underwent no change, is proved by the subsequent unanimous vote of her delegation in Congress. It is to the wise statesmanship of these men, that is owing the present felicitous condition of our laboring population. The progress of a joint civilization since that time, has rendered the treatment of slaves throughout the Union nearly the same; there is, therefore, no longer any reason for the suspicion which formerly existed with respect to negroes from other States, and all laws against their importation have been repealed. But every day widens the distance between the American and the native African slave, and the wisdom which counselled the passage of existing laws would imperatively demand their continuance.

Ditto.

This sketch discloses moreover, that the barbarians themselves were not the only barbarous things introduced by the slave trade; it was accompanied by all manner of horrid diseases, which were not confined to the City of Charleston alone, but spread through the length and breadth of the land irrespective of locality and climate. The West Indies have long labored under this affliction; certain species of maladies, as certain species of sharks, having followed in the wake of the slavers from the Bight of Benin to the Bay of Havana.

Ditto in a  
military  
point of  
view.

It shows, too, that they were not insensible to the necessity in a military point of view, of maintaining a due proportion between the dominant and servient races; the slave trade was accompanied by plans for the importation of a corresponding number of white servants. The Message prefers African slaves to European laborers; fortunately we are not compelled to choose between the two; our own white population increases with sufficient rapidity for the slaves we have. But when it is proposed to flood the land with barbarians, why is not some plan devised for at least retaining our own inhabitants at home. A vast tide has distributed throughout the West, one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred and seventy-nine native white Carolinians of all classes, whose virtues reflect honor upon the land of their

birth, but who are no longer devoted to her advancement. What means can be devised of preventing this evil, it is difficult to say; certainly the importation of barbarians will not render South Carolina a more attractive residence either to rich or poor, and it would be questionable statesmanship, to embrace what the experience of history, and particularly our own, has shown to be an evil, without providing in advance some antidote.

Such are some of the objections to this measure; the subject is not exhausted; many yet remain. The proposition cannot be entertained at all, unless beneficial to the State, but the converse does not follow; it could be easily shown, that there is a vast difference between bringing a Virginia negro to Carolina, where he finds nothing changed, except the sky above him, and catching one in Africa to sell him into a land in every respect foreign—but this would lead into another line of argument.

The principal question having thus been disposed of, viz: whether the revival of the Slave Trade would be advantageous to South Carolina, there remain certain minor points, which it is necessary to discuss, and suppose for this purpose, that the revival of the Slave Trade would be beneficial to the State; is it desirable that the question should be made an issue? Few will pretend that this measure is a vital necessity, a matter of such overwhelming importance as to occupy the whole political horizon, as did the claim of a right to tax America in 1776. Will the advantages resulting from its agitation equal the disadvantages? Place out of view its impracticability; admit for argument's sake, that it is practicable; that the nations at present so violently opposed to it, can be induced by soft words or hard blows, to withdraw their opposition, so far as we are concerned; that the repeal of the acts of Congress can be obtained. It is undeniable that a large majority of the people of the South, particularly of those who take no active part in political agitation, is opposed to the proposition, and that if put to the vote in this State to-morrow, it could not obtain one-tenth the suffrages. And the opposition is based, not upon considerations of expediency alone, but the mere idea arouses with many, a feeling of horror and disgust; husbands and fathers shudder at surrounding what is most precious to them with the perils of a heathen barbarism. As has been truly said, slaveholders would not view with gratification, a decline in the price of their slaves; every class and condition of society would have cause of dissatisfaction, and the contest would be fierce and bitter indeed; for the inducement would be the sanctity of our firesides. It would require long years of unremitting exertion and argument, of continued and violent struggling to produce a preponderance of sentiment in

General conclusion.

Would the agitation be beneficial.  
1st. Upon the supposition of an affirmative answer to the main question.



favor of the measure such as now exists against it; until then, the South would be rent with convulsive struggles and pass through all the phases of dissension which lie between unanimity on one side and unanimity on the other; slaveholders would, perhaps, be arrayed against each other; the Northern and Southern slave States would echo with mutual recriminations as the slave-breeding and slave-destroying States, while the lurid glare of the abolitionist millenium would illuminate the unnatural warfare. The present does not appear to the undersigned, a propitious time for entering upon such a contest. It is true, the South has both greater power to resist and less cause to fear unconstitutional aggression now, than ever; she has, in the main, carried off the victory on all the great points which have been contested, and enjoys the satisfaction of having obtained the recognition of her constitutional rights, without committing aggression upon any other member of the Confederacy; we have conquered a peace, but who can prophecy its perpetual duration? Should Carolina occupy this respite in sowing dissension broadcast throughout the South? No; let it rather be spent in increasing her physical power, developing her resources, reconciling the dissensions among her children and sisters and consolidating by every means in her power the fabric of their greatness. Even, therefore, if the Slave Trade were beneficial there would be little room for hesitation in this point of view between its advantages and disadvantages.

Suppose, on the other hand, that the Slave Trade would be injurious to South Carolina; is the agitation of the question desirable? This will seem to many a strange question, but it must be met. It is not intended to impute directly or indirectly, a want of sincerity to the supporters of the measure; of course there will be in this, as in every other party, men destitute of political principle and influenced only by motives of self-interest; it would be beneath the dignity of the Legislature to notice such; but a great many worthy persons are honestly disposed to make issues with the North from a spirit of pure combativeness, without regard to the ostensible cause. The undersigned does not boast an entire exemption from this failing, and is hence disposed to view it with leniency in others. There can be no greater mistake in politics than this; combativeness is a capital quality in action, but in council most useless and injurious. In taking a false position, we voluntarily move down from our stronghold and offer the enemy an advantage; it is possible to enter battle with the eyes closed, but it requires a marvellous constitution to keep them closed after the first stroke, when the weakness of our defence must be discerned, and who has not experienced the strength of that armour which consists in the conviction of a quarrel just? a defeat would, sooner or later, be inevitable, for, in the affairs of the world, truth must eventually prevail. The subject is too important to justify us in assuming any ground not fortified by both justice and expediency. More particularly, would it be unfortunate for the South, to take a false step, since all the propositions she has hitherto advanced, have been sustained by the returning good sense of the people, and as we are to fight a moral as well as a political battle, it is highly desirable that we should continue to be right.

2d. Upon  
the supposi-  
tion of a  
negative  
answer.

If, then, it be not for the advantage of South Carolina to revive the Slave Trade, nor yet to agitate the question, is it desirable that she should strive to procure the repeal of the existing laws upon the subject? It has already been shown that these laws were passed with the approbation and votes of her Representatives in Congress, acting in full sympathy with their constituents, and that it is impossible under the circumstances, to attach any discredit to the institution, from laws which we ourselves have enacted. For whose sake, then, would this repeal be obtained? of course, no African would be imported here, for, by supposition, that would be injurious to Carolina, and not desirable. If the State would not profit by its revival neither would her citizens. Previous to 1808, it was carried on mostly by New England men and New England capital, with agencies established in Charleston, and since that period, it has a clandestine existence only, at the North. No instance can be adduced of a native Carolinian's being implicated in the remotest degree. Our people have manifested no partiality for this commerce, whether from a moral repugnance or from a pride that scorns such an occupation, cannot be ascertained; the fact is so. The advantage, then, of such a movement, on the part of the State, would accrue to the traders themselves and to Yankee capitalists—strangers who owe her no allegiance, and have no claims upon her protection. Whatever may be said of the trade itself, few eulogiums can be passed upon those who are engaged in the prosecution of it. The horrors of the Middle Passage have certainly not been exaggerated, nor is it possible to exaggerate the crimes which will be committed by such men, when engaged in an occupation where a death penalty stares them continually in the face. Nor would the impolicy of existing laws be any excuse for *their* conduct. Is there, then, any reason which would justify South Carolina in volunteering to throw her mantle around these outcasts, whose crimes have everywhere driven them beyond the pale of humanity? can we refrain from blushing at the suggestion and from shrinking with horror at the thought of such contamination? Never! let her preserve in jealous purity, the character which has been handed down to her from former generations; and if these men need an advocate, let him be sought among those who were born upon the same soil and nurtured by the same Heaven.

In the preceding discussion, reference to such topics as might appeal to prejudice rather than reason, has been studiously avoided. If ever there was an occasion, when the happiness of South Carolina should be the object of solicitude and wise deliberation, it is this; but the time for deliberation once past, any hesitation is fraught with infinite evil. The question having been brought directly before the Legislature, a year devoted to its consideration, and there remaining scarcely the shadow of a doubt as to the sentiments of the State, it is desirable that her position should no longer be equivocal. The undersigned, therefore, recommends the adoption of the following resolutions, embodying to a certain extent, the sentiments contained in the preceding report:

1st. *Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Body, the introduction of barbarians, whether slave or free, from any part of the world, would be injurious to the best interests of the State of South Carolina.

Should South Carolina agitate the repeal of existing laws.

The position of the State should be no longer equivocal.

Resolutions recommended.



2d. *Resolved*, That, in the opinion of this Body, an endorsement by the Legislature of the proposition to revive the African Slave Trade, would be calculated to sow dissension throughout the South at a time when its union is necessary to its safety.

3d. *Resolved*, That, inasmuch as citizens of South Carolina do not participate in the prosecution of the African Slave Trade, this State feels little interest in the species of punishment denounced against the violators of the law of the United States upon the subject, and would consider any effort on her part in the existing division of sentiment at the South, to procure their repeal, as unnecessary and impolitic in the last degree.

Respectfully submitted,

J. JOHNSTON PETTIGREW.

Among the various criticisms on this Report, appeared one, purporting to be a refutation, the burden of which was, that I and those who agreed with me in opinion, were selfish, haughty, rice and sea-island cotton planting, South Carolina Aristocrats, abounding in negroes, and desirous of preventing the "poor, unpretending" corn planter, from having his share, in short, developing and endorsing with much frankness, the argument considered on page 20, of this pamphlet. Circumstances connected with its republication, drew from me a letter, a portion of which I hereunto append, as it supplies what would otherwise seem to be an omission in the Report, as presented:

"Some of the positions taken by me, having been incorrectly stated, I will, with your permission, state them correctly. As you are aware, I was substituted on the Committee about an hour before the Reports were presented, for the express purpose of submitting a Minority Report, and, consequently, had not, at that time, read the Majority Report, nor was I singular in this respect.

The principal question presented to my mind, by the Governor's Message, was the one discussed by me. The African Squadron was not mentioned in that document. I am in favor of abrogating the 8th Article of the Treaty of Washington, for a variety of reasons. I do not consider the Slave Trade piracy, indeed, the contrary is almost expressly admitted in the Report; but the propriety of making a sectional issue on these two points, is a different matter. I thought then, and think still, that they are of very minor importance, and do not believe that five hundred people in the State, care a straw about the subject. And so, the question of introducing a barbarian population into Louisiana or Texas, if those States desire it, is a different question, to be discussed when that desire is manifested. It is, certainly true, that all of these matters are secondary, in my opinion, to the great question (to us,) of introducing it into South Carolina, and upon this question, the Minority Report is not in so small a minority, even in the Committee, as seems to be supposed.

It is very puerile to descend to such personalities in discussing a question of State policy, but, perhaps, I will be justified in saying, by way of reply, that the plantations in which I am most interested, are grain plantations beyond the Cape Fear. It may be, therefore, that the re-opening of the Slave Trade would benefit me, as an individual. All things considered, I am of a different opinion; but even if I were not, my duty required me to regard the welfare of the whole State of South Carolina, and not my own peculiar interest."







